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Author

Cutler, Eloisa

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Holistic Nursing and Interprofessional Research at UC San Diego

By Eloisa Cutler

As a Respiratory Therapist (RT), caring for patients at the end-of-life can be one of the most challenging and heartbreaking aspects of our job. We are trained to be compassionate and empathetic, but we have to be careful, because it can be very draining emotionally when we become attached to our patients. This is particularly true in the case of Cystic Fibrosis (CF) patients, where relationships are cultivated over many years, due to the chronic nature of the disease.

Last year, I attended a palliative care class, with my co-workers in Respiratory Therapy. During the class, there was some discussion about compassionate extubation. One of my peers spoke up about the timing in which RTs become aware of the extubation decision, despite the major role they play during this process. Her concern was that RTs are not given enough time to be emotionally prepared, and may feel left out of the decision process despite being integral to the patient's care. Shortly after the class, Catie Madani, an RN who I've worked with in the Thornton ICU, had a conversation with me about this issue. She suggested that it would be interesting and important to investigate the emotional effects on RTs of performing compassionate extubation. We decided to collaborate on an exploratory study here at UC San Diego. After researching the literature and finding very limited published data, we co-wrote the research plan, received IRB approval, and began interviewing therapists. We expect to complete the project before the end of the year.

Personally, this is a very important study to me. It was surprising how little literature was out there to help understand and support the RT's role

during compassionate extubation, despite the vital role we play. Respiratory Therapists are the health care providers who actually have the responsibility to physically withdraw advanced life support.

We hope our findings lead to a better understanding of the RT's perspective, and how they cope during this challenging process. This may lead to theory development as well as encourage UC San Diego and other institutions to become more aware of the RT's role and emotional response during compassionate extubation. Limitations in the present process and ideas for improvement may also be discovered, and in turn, lead to improved RT education at the national level. Ultimately, this will provide better care for patients and their families during one of the most difficult times in their lives. I am honored to be a part of this study.

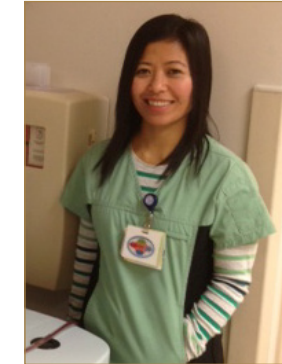


Eloisa Cutler

UC San Diego Nursing Research and EBP Council Members



Karen Vejvoda, BSN, RN, CDE, has been employed at UCSD since 1998, working the entire time with the Diabetes Prevention Program, a multi-center clinical trial sponsored by the National Institutes of Health (NIH). As a research nurse, she focuses on careful data collection while monitoring the safety and wellness of the study subjects. She is required to adhere to many local, state and federal regulations during the study protocol. Karen uses her skills as a Certified Diabetes Educator when she helps study participants learn protocol-prescribed lifestyle and diabetes management behaviors. She completed the UCSD Extension Certificate Program in Clinical Trials Design and Management, and achieved national endorsement as a Certified Clinical Research Coordinator. Karen joined the Nursing Research and EBP Council for the opportunity to collaborate with nurses who love learning and enjoy the rewards of the research process. Research offers Karen an exciting opportunity to make a difference now and for the future. She is grateful that the Council welcomes all nurses, no matter their background or clinical role, and has learned about nursing research through her membership. Karen believes, "If you are new to the research process, want to strengthen your developing research skills, or are a seasoned research veteran, this is the place for you. It's truly energizing to be around such a dedicated, enthusiastic, professional group of nurses." She encourages other nurses to join the Council and inquire about your practice through research and evidence-based practice techniques.



Sherlita Aguilar BSN, RN, ONC, is a clinical nurse in the Apheresis Program of the UC San Diego Health System. She received her Bachelor of Science in Nursing from St. Louis University in the Philippines in 1998, and has worked in various fields, with a special interest in community nursing. Sherlita immigrated to the United States of America in 2007, to improve her skills and increase her knowledge of nursing practice. She worked at Sharp Coronado Hospital in the Telemetry/Medical Surgical area in 2008. After hearing so many great things about UCSD, she joined the Trauma/Orthopedics/Neuro-Surgery Acute Care Med/Surg Specialty Unit and worked there for six years. While a member of the 8th floor staff, she joined the Bonafide Orthopedic Nursing Education Symposium (BONES) committee and became Orthopedic Nurse Certified (ONC). In 2011, she transferred to the Apheresis Program to venture into other fields of nursing. Joining the Nursing Research and Evidence-Based Practice (EBP) Council was one of the most fulfilling professional collaborations of her nursing career. This council benefited her in many different ways, including gaining access to a vast number of nursing projects, which gave her insight into increasing her knowledge base and improving patient outcomes. She presented her Central Line-Associated Bloodstream Infection (CLABSI) project in fulfillment of her Clinical Nurse III advancement to the Council, and has embraced many opportunities to disseminate her work.



Michael Baumgardner, MSN, RN, CCRN, CNL is currently the assistant nurse manager of the Progressive Care Unit (7/9/11 PCU), the co-chair of the Shared Governance Nursing Cabinet, and a member of the Nursing Research and EBP Council. Michael earned his bachelor's degree from UC Santa Cruz. He was contemplating entering medical school upon graduation, but decided instead to take a year off from school. During that time he worked within a Skilled Nursing Facility in their admission department.

While working in that capacity, Michael decided that medical school was not the academic degree he wanted. Instead, he began a five-year discernment process about a vocation in ministry.

In 1995 Michael received a Master's in Divinity from the Pontifical Gregorian University in Italy and was ordained a priest. He has worked extensively with end of life care while serving as a Catholic Priest in the Diocese of San Diego and as a spiritual counselor at San Diego Hospice. It was his work within hospice that inspired him to reconsider a career in the healthcare industry. The interdisciplinary and holistic approach to providing care for hospice patients made such an impression on him, he decided to pursue a nursing degree. He attended the University of San Diego, Hahn School of Nursing and received his Master's in Nursing in 2011. Shortly after graduating, Michael was hired to work on the progressive care unit. Recently, Michael joined the Nursing Research and EBP Council at UC San Diego to learn from others who have been engaged in the process of conducting research. He is passionate about bringing an interdisciplinary approach to the care of the human person that promotes the dignity of both the patient and family. Michael returned to school in the Fall of 2014 to work on his PhD in Nursing at University of San Diego. His research interest is focused on the impact of the inclusion of palliative care on the spiritual well-being and quality of life indicators in the caregiver.